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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAKU 001467

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/11/2017  
TAGS: PREL PGOV MARR MASS PARM AJ  
SUBJECT: DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER AZIMOV ON MISSILE DEFENSE  
AND OTHER SECURITY ISSUES

REF: A. STATE 161988  
1B. BAKU 01382

Classified By: Ambassador Anne E. Derse for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary. Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov told the Ambassador on December 8 that Azerbaijan supports the U.S. proposal for a joint regional missile defense system. Even if Washington and Moscow do not agree to a specific joint regional system, the GOAJ is open to discussing potential U.S. or NATO use of Azerbaijan's Gabala radar station. Azimov argued that whatever the modalities, Azerbaijan would like some level of security assurances in exchange for access to the facility; he also presented a list of questions related to the regional missile defense architecture (see para 3). Azimov reiterated the GOAJ's opposition to the adapted CFE treaty. Azimov was receptive to National War College professor James MacDougall and Nathan Freer reviewing the GOAJ's military doctrine and the U.S. interagency effort to formulate expert-level technical questions regarding the GOAJ's critical energy infrastructure protection plans. End Summary.

Missile Defense

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12. (C) The Ambassador briefed Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov December 8 on ref A talking points regarding the November 26 U.S.-Russia discussions on missile defense and the CFE treaty. Azimov said the GOAJ supports the U.S. proposal for a joint regional missile defense architecture, although Baku would like security and political assurances if the Gabala radar station plays a role in such a system. Azimov's bottom line was that whatever the specific modalities of a U.S.-Russian or broader missile defense system, Azerbaijan would like to be included. Even if Washington and Moscow do not agree to cooperate, Azerbaijan is interested in discussing U.S. or NATO access to the facility, according to Azimov.

13. (C) Azimov asked several questions about the points. While we assume that the U.S. will be unable to answer these questions until we conclude our discussions with Moscow, Azimov's questions reflect the GOAJ's desire for information about our U.S.-Russia discussions and eagerness to play some role in a potential regional missile defense architecture. Azimov asked:

-- To what extent does the Gabala radar station fit in with a potential U.S.-Russian missile defense structure and within a potential broader regional missile defense structure?

-- If Gabala was part of a broader regional missile defense structure, would Russia and NATO have the same degree of control over the facility?

-- What type of security assurances would be offered to Azerbaijan if it participated in a U.S.-Russian or broader regional missile defense system? Would all of Azerbaijani territory be covered under a potential regional missile defense structure? (NOTE: Azimov's focus on security assurances relates to Azerbaijani concerns vis-a-vis Iran.)

-- Have the U.S. and Russia considered conducting a technical assessment of Gabala to see what type of upgrades could allow the facility to play a role in a regional missile defense structure? (Azimov would primarily welcome details on the USG's technical assessment of Gabala, he said.) Azimov suggested the possibility of expanding the role that Gabala currently plays - i.e. upgrading the facility to perform missions beyond the early detection of a missile launch.

-- Azimov said Moscow probably would leave the Gabala facility in 2012 as Armavir comes online. (NOTE: Azerbaijan and Moscow concluded a ten-year lease for Russia to access the facility in 2002.) Azimov asked whether the U.S. or NATO would be interested in accessing the facility, even if Moscow no longer uses Gabala.

-- In response to the U.S. proposal for the reciprocal stationing of U.S. and Russian troops at U.S. and Russian missile defense sites, would U.S. personnel be visiting or permanently stationed at Gabala? He said he thought it unlikely Russia would agree to U.S. personnel being stationed at Gabala, though they may agree to accept personnel in Moscow.

CFE

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¶4. (C) Azimov reiterated the GOAJ's position on CFE (ref B), namely that the GOAJ does not support the adapted CFE treaty because it is not conducive to Azerbaijan's national security. In particular, the treaty disadvantages Azerbaijan in the context of Armenia's occupation of Nagorno Karabakh (NK) and the seven surrounding districts. Azimov reiterated the GOAJ's view that Armenia is violating its armament limits because of its equipment in NK.

¶5. (C) Azimov noted that Anatoly Antonov, Director of the Russian MFA's Department of Security and Disarmament, will visit Baku on December 11 to discuss CFE issues in lieu of Deputy Foreign Minister Kislyak originally expected. Azimov stated that Antonov does not have primary responsibility for missile defense issues, so the visit will focus primarily on CFE, not missile defense.

Security Dialogue

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¶6. (C) Azimov was receptive to the Ambassador's offer to have National War College professor Jim MacDougall provide a technical review of the GOAJ's military doctrine and other security-related documents. He said the MOD would also welcome the participation of Nathan Freer. He laid out several next steps: (1) U.S., Turkish, German, and UK experts will each provide their comments (We have received comments from State and will relay; no comments have been received from DoD.); (2) the GOAJ will consolidate these comments and send them to the GOAJ experts group for consideration; (3) foreign expert advisors will come to Baku to discuss the military doctrine in January.

¶7. (C) The Ambassador briefed Azimov on the U.S. interagency effort to provide expert-level technical questions on

Azerbaijan's critical energy infrastructure plans (CEIP) and BP's work with GOAJ agencies in this regard (septel). Azimov welcomed the effort, noting SOCAR chief Abdullayev had requested help on CEIP and stating that we also engage with SOCAR in this effort.

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